

## **Richard Gordon Hartley**

### **Background and work experience**

I was born in June 1939 in Berkshire, England. On leaving school I joined Richard Costain, contractors, as a pupil engineer, and worked for the company for a year on a Glasgow construction site before starting an engineering course at Glasgow University. I worked for Costain in the long vacations and also for Mott, Hay & Anderson on the Forth Road Bridge. I graduated with an honours degree in civil engineering and after working on a Canadian construction site for six months, I joined John Laing & Sons in England and worked on two city construction sites in Chester and Cambridge, as materials control engineer on the construction of Wraybury Reservoir, a large earth dam reservoir near London, and on structural and sewerage design. In 1968 I came to WA to work for the consultants, Maunsell & Partners, on the design of the WAGR standard gauge railway from Fremantle and Kwinana to Kalgoorlie, principally on urban freight terminals and main line earthworks and drainage. Subsequently I was project engineer for the standard gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Kambalda and Widgiemooltha and worked on the design of other railways in the Pilbara, Tasmania and South Africa, and on urban infrastructure planning, water and wastewater schemes and the Dampier to Perth and Wagerup natural gas pipeline.

I also completed half of a part-time Masters degree in Environmental Science at Murdoch University. I retired from engineering in 1984 due to ill health. I worked in the WA State Archives accessioning and cataloguing railway and public works drawings and documents before starting a degree in History at Murdoch University. I wrote my Honours thesis on Herbert Hoover and Bewick Moreing, the mine management company in which he was a partner, and during my research was surprised to find that no significant historical work had been done on the historical development of gold processing in Kalgoorlie. Consequently my Doctoral thesis (1998) dealt with the history of Kalgoorlie gold metallurgy from 1895 to 1915, in particular the years from 1902 to 1907 when Kalgoorlie processing technology led the world. In 1995 I was a founder member of the Australian Mining History Association. In 1992 I joined the WA Engineering Heritage Panel of Engineers Australia and was later its secretary for three years and am honorary archivist for the WA Division of Engineers Australia. My historical interests in Kalgoorlie and public works in WA, the centenary of the Goldfields Water Supply and inadequacies in the historical writing on the GWS all persuaded me to embark on a history of the GWS which from its commencement has taken nearly ten years.

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